

DEDICATED TO OUR COMMUNITY, OUR PROFESSION AND EACH OTHER

Summer 2011

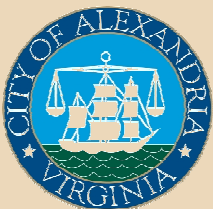


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On the web!
www.alexandriava.gov/fire



THE RESPONDER

FIRE IT STAFF RESPOND TO MULTIPLE ALARM EVENT

On April 21 the City faced a major challenge within its information systems. On that day a new and emerging computer virus infected one City agency. The virus soon spread throughout that agency's computer systems and beyond its network; eventually infecting the computer systems utilized by the Alexandria Fire Department. The new virus presented many challenges for the Department and the City. The City Information Technology (IT) Department took the lead on eradicating the virus. However, Fire IT staff rapidly deployed all their resources to battle this virus within the Fire Department

systems. Fire IT staff began a concerted effort to isolate and eliminate the virus beginning on Friday, April 22. Working 12 or more hours each day, Fire IT staff set up a computer operations center at Fire Headquarters.



Captain Tony Washington (l) and Acting Lieutenant Greg Cook (r) prepare to return a batch of cleaned computers.



Fire IT Staff (l to r) George November, Jim Lynch, Mark Hartman, Mike Zuidema and Siri Kongdee pause briefly for a picture before continuing to eradicate a virus in the Fire IT systems.

Division Chief James Lynch was designated as the incident commander. Staff members Mark Hartman, George November, Michael Zuidema, Sirirat Kongdee and Code Administration IT member Ken Moss worked tirelessly cleaning every

computer system in the department.

In order to facilitate more efficiency in addressing this issue, Captain Tony Washington and Acting Lieutenant Greg Cook took on the task of collecting every computer (PC and Mobile Data Browser) from every Fire Department worksite and transporting them to Fire Headquarters where the Fire IT Team could work on them. Tony and Greg would then shuttle them back to each worksite afterward. This process enabled IT staff to work on multiple PCs at a single

SEE IT, PAGE 8, COLUMN 1.

Safety, Health and Survival

By Captain Jeff Merryman

By the time this article reaches publication, the Fire and EMS service may be in the midst of the 2011 Fire/ EMS Safety, Health and Survival Week or it may have just passed. Regardless of where we stand in time as you read this article, safety, health and survival is obviously not limited to just this one week in June of each year. We owe it to ourselves and each other to practice the operations that keep us safe and healthy every minute of every day of every year.

To kick off the 2011 Fire/ EMS Safety, Health and Survival Week our department offered a 4-hour seminar entitled "The A, B, C's of Safety Leadership." Former Fire Chief's Ron Dennis and Billy Hayes made the trek from farther south to raise our awareness on the importance of safety. It was an interactive program inclusive of police, IT personnel, administrative personnel, EMS and obviously Fire personnel.

One item that stood out for me was the presence of the City's Risk Manager and some of his staff. Our department is leading

the way in the City with regards to health and safety and the Risk Manager is one of our biggest supporters. We have recently been asked by the police department for some direction as they build their safety unit. General Services (GS) and Transportation and Environmental Services (TES) have reached out to us for training, as well.

At times, we are all distracted by some of the on-going "issues" within our department. Sometimes these issues can and will distract us from the mission at-hand and quite possibly cause us to become complacent or even worse apply a "don't care" attitude. It is times like this that will put us at greater risk for injury or unfortunately something worse.

Through the ups and downs that I have experienced in the past 25 years in our department, I have tried very hard not to let those things that I cannot control distract me. Now, I hear some of you laughing because we both know I haven't been very successful at times dealing with distractions. Yes, you are right but that does not dismiss the fact that I have tried.

Good times or bad, distracted or not, hot weather or cold, personal responsibility for safety should prevail. Even with issues and



distractions, the HSU is committed to the delivery of its mission each and every day. Let me emphasize again, we owe it to ourselves and each other to practice those operations that will keep us safe and healthy.

In the cliché world, It can prove beneficial in challenging times to look at those things that we should be thankful for such as; yearly medical exams, 2 sets of quality gear along with maintenance, soon to purchased fire engines with the latest and greatest safety features, 2 new medic units with the latest and greatest safety features, work-out facilities with modern equipment and of course, Shift Safety Officers to keep us focused and

to "watch our backs." (Forgive me for the HSU self-promotion)

If you are going through a "slump," pull your perimeter closer, block out those things that are distracting, re-focus and remind yourself of some of the positive things that are in-place. Most importantly, take the time to revisit your commitment toward health and safety. At times, we are tested; I implore you, don't fail a health and safety test.

Stay Safe! 🚒

Fire News

Firefighters have been pretty busy over the last quarter. At the end of March the Alexandria Fire Department was notified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of award of a \$1.6 million grant to hire and train twelve new firefighters. The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant was awarded to Alexandria after an extensive nationwide competitive review process. The SAFER grant positions will be utilized to increase the minimum staffing levels on four of the City's eight engine companies from three to four firefighter / EMTs.

"This is an important step forward in meeting the Department's commitment to public safety" said Alexandria Fire Chief Adam Thiel. "These new positions will provide safer staffing for responses to fire and emergency incidents, allowing essential tasks to be managed effectively and efficiently. This will bring the Department closer to meeting the NFPA 1710 standard for minimum staffing levels and address deficiencies noted by an independent consultant and the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) Agency after the August 2007 three alarm fire at Alexandria Knolls West." Thiel added.

The Fire Department was authorized to apply for the SAFER grant on September 14, 2010, by the Mayor and Council. The new firefighters will report to work shortly after July 1.

On April 8 at 1:21 PM Alexandria Fire Department units responded to a three alarm apartment fire in the Seminary Forest apartment complex. The first fire engine arrived within 3 minutes of the initial dispatch. Firefighters reported smoke and fire coming from a second floor apartment at the rear of a garden apartment building. Alexandria firefighters with the assistance of firefighters from Fairfax and Arlington Counties made an aggressive attack on the fire and were able to contain the fire to a single apartment with fire a small amount of fire damage to the balcony of the apartment above. In addition, fire-

fighters were able to stop the fire prior to it entering the attic space of the apartment building. There were no injuries reported from this fire.

Several factors prevented the fire from spreading further into the structure. One of the City's three ladder trucks was out of service for repairs. The firefighters assigned to that truck were reassigned to the Seminary Road fire station where they staffed a heavy rescue squad which is normally unstaffed. The Seminary road fire station was less than a block away from the fire. Both the heavy rescue squad and the fire engine assigned to the Seminary Road station were able to arrive quickly and begin performing critical tasks including evacuation of the building occupants early in the fire. The incident commander, recognizing the apartment building was not protected by a fire sprinkler system, initiated a second and subsequent third alarm to provide additional resources to contain the fire early in the incident and supplement the three person firefighter crews initially fighting the fire.

With the assistance of firefighters from Arlington and Fairfax Counties, the bulk of the fire was able to be contained to apartment where the fire originated. An initial damage estimate is \$250,000. Three residents were displaced by the fire. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

On April 27 at 1:53 am the Alexandria Hazardous Materials Team responded to the GenOn plant located at 1400 N. Royal



Street for a report of a leaking Sulfuric Acid tank. Units arrived within 5 minutes. The intersection of Bashford Lane and N. Royal Street as well as a portion of the Mount Vernon bicycle trail behind the plant were closed as a precautionary measure. Alexandria City and Arlington County HazMat Team members donned protective equipment, entered site and determined there was no active leak or fumes emitting from the area. The 15 x 20 containment basin con-

tained an estimated 1,300 gallon of product from the storage tank. The Team determined there was no hazard to residents and all street closures were reopened by 4:45 am. A leaking valve was determined to be the cause of the incident.

GenOn provided a cleanup contractor to remove the product later in the day.

On the late morning of April 28, Alexandria and Fairfax County units responded to Interstate 395 prior to Shirlington Circle for a reported overturned vehicle. The accident shut down the northbound lanes of the highway. Three passengers in the



one car accident were treated and transported to area hospitals for injuries sustained in the accident. None of the occupants were wearing their seatbelts.

On May 1 at 9:02 am Alexandria Fire Department units were called to 2003 Mill Road, the Alexandria Public Safety Center, to investigate an odor in the building. Alexandria Firefighters and Medics responding as the Hazardous Materials Team responded and discovered a contractor on scene who was in the process of sealing a locker room floor on the first floor with a chemical. The chemical product, Scofield Formula 1, was being applied with acetone to seal the locker room floor when the odor began causing headaches to Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) 911 Call Center personnel on the second floor. The 911 Call Center was ordered to be evacuated by Fire Department and relocated to the City's back up 911 Call Center. 911 and non-emergency services were not disrupted. Radio communications with police and fire units were also unaffected by the incident. Seven City employees at the facility were evaluated by paramedics. No employees required medical assistance, and Fire Department units cleared the scene at 2:10 pm.

SEE FIRE NEWS, PAGE 8, COLUMN 2.



EMS News



One of Alexandria's newest Medic Units sits on King Street at Market Square promoting EMS Week.

Alexandria's EMS providers were extremely busy during National EMS Week which was recognized May 15 to 21. This year's theme is **L.I.F.E.** Learning Instruction For Emergencies. Medics prepared a brochure with information about certain types of emergencies and how to deal with each situation. Selected topics included Diabetes, Seizures, Stroke, Cardiac emergencies, Trauma, Poisoning and Allergic reactions.

On May 19, EMS providers gathered at the Alexandria Hospital for a breakfast and awards ceremony recognizing the contributions of first responders to medical incidents in the City. Recognized by the Fire Department and the City's EMS Council:



Medics Tracy Eichelberger, Tim Jaffry and EMS Supervisor John Rule take vitals on an interested citizen at the Patient and Trademark Office.



Mayor William Euille, Alexandria Emergency Department Medical Director Martin Brown, MD., Assistant Fire Chief Andrew Snead and Fire Chief Adam Thiel accept a Proclamation from City Council recognizing National EMS Week in Alexandria.

nized by the Fire Department and the City's EMS Council:

Pamela Copley as past chair of the council

Diane Dickerson for her continued guidance as past Secretary to the council

James Vafier MD, for his 20 years as the department's Operational Medical Director

Recognized by the department for 30 years in EMS:

EMS Supervisor Martie Tuthill

Paramedic Elizabeth King

Paramedic William Jordan

Recognized by the department for Outstanding Contribution to EMS in Alexandria - James Vafier, MD

All of the Call of the Quarter Award winners since the program's inception in the 3rd quarter of 2006 were given pins. Of note for the first quarter of 2011 were Paramedic William Jordan, Medic Scott Serino, and EMS Supervisor John Rule.

On May 20 and 21 medics and firefighters fanned out across the City to take B/P's, do dexistics and perform 12 Lead EKG's. Locations where these activities occurred were City Hall, the U.S. Patent Trademark Office, Farmers Market at Market Square, Bradlee shopping center, Foxchase shopping center, and Potomac Yards shopping center.

Also on Friday evening, May 20, the National Memorial EMS Bike Ride's "Muddy Angels" concluded two memorial rides which began on May 14th and ended in Alexandria. One ride originated in Paintsville, Kentucky and another in Boston, Massachusetts. They joined together to conclude their ride, bringing recognition to those lost in the line of duty while providing EMS care. A reception for these riders was held at the Alexandria Westin on Saturday, May 21.



EMS Memorial Bike Riders gather in front of the Westin Alexandria Hotel to celebrate and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice while providing emergency care.

SEE EMS, PAGE 9, COLUMN 3.

Welcome Assistant Chiefs

In May and June the Alexandria Fire Department welcomed two new Assistant Fire Chiefs to the Fire Department Executive Team.

On May 16, Assistant Fire Chief Rudolph Thomas reported to work and began his duties overseeing the Department's new Fire Prevention and Life Safety Section.



Rudolph Thomas
Assistant Fire Chief

Chief Thomas is very well respected in the fire service community for his professionalism and his ability to build positive relationships between career and volunteer firefighters and the citizens in which they serve. He spent two decades as a fire service professional for the Prince Georges County Fire/EMS Department and promoted through the ranks from Firefighter to Assistant Chief. Chief Thomas has a wealth of experience and has served in many capacities to include: Emergency Operations, Fire Marshal's Office, Bomb Squad and executive level administrative positions. His tenure also includes serving as the Special Operations Commander in which he managed the Technical Rescue Teams, Honor Guard, Marine Division and all special events held at FedEx Field and the National Harbor. Chief Thomas is a results-oriented, high energy, hands-on professional with a successful record of accomplishments who embraces new technologies, innovative thinking, and team building concepts.

One of Chief Thomas' most personal contributions to the fire service was the development of an award winning Honor Guard team who gained notoriety throughout the region by consistently demonstrating their military-like precision at events, honoring their fellow firefighters, and winning several local and regional competitions. In 2000, Chief Thomas and his team were chosen to lead the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service and coordinate all of the Honor/Color guards participating. This ceremony is considered to be the most prestigious memorial ceremony in the country.

Chief Thomas is a member of the International Association of Arson Investigators; International Association of Black Professional Firefighters; International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators; International Association of Emergency Managers; International Association of Firefighters; and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Chief Thomas comes to Alexandria with a goal to help move the department to the forefront as leaders in the fire service and to continue delivering outstanding public service to its residents, workers and visitors.

In his spare time Chief Thomas enjoys engaging in family activities. He is a member of the First Baptist Church of Glenarden. His hobbies include bowling, golfing, coaching, and fantasy football. He has lived in the metropolitan area his entire life, married for 18 years, and has two children.

On June 20, Dr. Jeffrey Lindsey, Ph.D. reported to work and began working with the department's Executive team as he prepares to assume the duties of the Assistant Fire Chief for the Emergency Medical Services Section. Beginning July 1, Assistant Chief Snead assumed his new assignment overseeing Fire Emergency Services and Assistant Chief Pouget began her new assignment commanding the Support Services Section.

Assistant Chief Lindsey has been involved in the emergency services profession since 1980. He has a diverse background with experience as an educator, 911 dispatcher, paramedic, firefighter and rose to the rank of fire chief. Chief Lindsey is an experienced

leader, educator, lecturer, author, and consultant in emergency services. He earned his Doctorate and Master's degree in Education from the University of South Florida. He also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Fire and Safety Engineering from the University of Cincinnati, and an Associate in Paramedics from Harrisburg Area Community College. He earned his Chief Fire Officer designation and completed the Executive Fire Officer program. He is an associate member of the Pre-Hospital Research Forum, a representative to the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education EMS degree committee, and liaison for the IAFC EMS section to ACEP. He served on the inaugural National EMS Advisory Council and as the safety chairperson of the Council. He is the past member of the State of Florida EMS Advisory Council, Vice Chair of the Florida Fire Chiefs EMS section, NAEMT Governor of Florida, board member of NAEMSE, and Chairperson of the Strategic Planning com-



Jeff Lindsey
Assistant Fire Chief

mittee for the Lee County Fire Chiefs Association. He is the recipient of the 2011 James O. Page EMS award from IAFC EMS.

When not involved with fire and EMS activities Chief Lindsey enjoys reading, writing, organic cooking, outdoor activities especially near or on the water. He most enjoys spending time with his three kids.

Welcome Chief Thomas and Chief Lindsey.





The Captain, Commander Todd S. Weeks and Crew of the USS Alexandria (SSN 757) "Twice As Strong" pose in front of their boat in Groton, Connecticut prior to their next mission.

Photo Courtesy of the U. S. Navy.

"USS ALEXANDRIA is the seventh of the 23 improved LOS ANGELES - class nuclear-powered attack submarines and the third ship in the Navy named after the cities in Louisiana and Virginia. During her 2004 deployment, the ALEXANDRIA became the first improved LOS ANGELES - class submarine to circumnavigate the globe in the way she did: Departing Groton, CT., on June 11, 2004, she transited under the Arctic ice to the Pacific, entered the US Central Command's area and returned home via the Suez Canal, Mediterranean, and Atlantic Ocean."

Source: www.usnavysite.de

General Characteristics:

- Commissioned:** June 29, 1991
- Builder:** Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corporation, Groton, CT
- Propulsion system:** one nuclear reactor
- Propellers:** one
- Length:** 360 feet (109.73 meters)
- Beam:** 33 feet (10 meters)
- Draft:** 32,15 feet (9.8 meters)
- Displacement:** Surfaced: approx. 6,255 tons
- Displacement:** Submerged: approx. 7,102 tons
- Speed:** Surfaced: approx. 15 knots
- Speed:** Submerged: approx. 32 knots
- Armament:** Tomahawk missiles from 12 VLS-tubes, four 533 mm torpedo tubes for Mk-48 torpedoes, Harpoon missiles, ability to lay mines
- Cost:** approx. \$900 million
- Homeport:** Groton, CT
- Crew:** 12 Officers, 115 Enlisted

Community Engagement

During the second quarter of 2011 the department has been very involved in community through a variety of outreach activities and events.

During the month of April and the first week of May firefighters ventured out to preschools and kindergarten classes across the City to deliver valuable fire safety messages. While tours of the fire equipment was a big draw for these children, the messages presented by the firefighters went a long way towards creating fire safety awareness and promoting fire safe behaviors.



The crew of Engine 204 pose with students from Flagstone Child Development Center.

Across the Nation, fire deaths and serious fire injuries affect young children and the elderly statistically more than any other age group.

Focus on both age groups is one of the most effective ways to reduce these risks.

During the preschool and kindergarten education campaign, firefighters visited over thirty five schools reaching over 2800 students with age appropriate educational materials. These visits were received positively by all attendees.

On April 27 fire and EMS partnered with area Baskin-Robbins stores to promote 31 cent scoop night. Proceeds and donations from the event went to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation which provides aid and assistance to the families of firefighters who lose their life in the line of duty.

The department collected over \$1200 in donations which is almost double what was collected last year!

On May 6th and again on May 13, fire and EMS personnel ventured out in several older communities as a part of the City's annual Spring for Alexandria program. Department members visited 472 homes offering to test or install free smoke alarms, conduct home safety inspections and provide medical information forms that can aid paramedics when responding to medical emergencies at a residence.

Of all the homes visited, department members replaced 14 batteries in smoke alarms, installed 20 lithium powered smoke alarms for senior citizens and installed 19 regular smoke alarms.

As noted in an earlier article (*See EMS News, Page 4*) medics and firefighters participated in EMS Week activities during the week of May 15. Many in the community learned invaluable lessons on how to recognize and prevent the seven most common types of medical emergencies.

In June firefighters and staff from Community Services began installing 10 year lithium powered smoke detectors in the homes of senior citizens living independently. The alarms were provided as part of the Get Alarmed Virginia grant administered by the Virginia Department of Health. Alexandria was allocated 400 alarms. Department staff began installing alarms in over 50 homes to start, resulting in over 100 alarms installed so far. Many homes had no smoke detection or inoperative alarms. Staff conducted home safety inspections as well as medical information assessments for each of the residents.

During one visit of note, firefighters spent over ninety minutes at one home where they discovered several serious items of concern. Captain Mike Cross of Engine Company 206 recalls "Prior to performing the home safety survey, the resident mentioned having electrical problems over the past year. She said that there were several times that lights would not work, and one time that almost half of the home was without power." Fur-



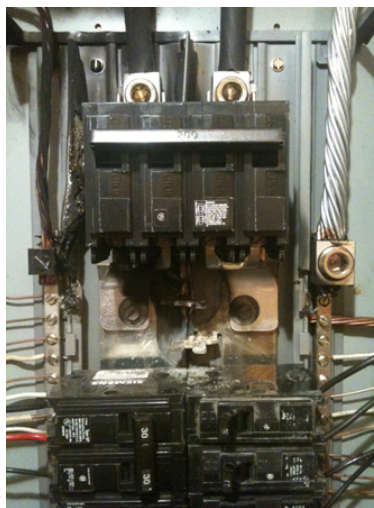
Fire and EMS personnel visited two neighborhoods during Spring for Alexandria, testing and installing smoke alarms as well as conducting in home safety inspections.

ther investigation by the crew of Engine 206 determined evidence of an electrical short on the main bus bars near the main breaker and on the ground bond bar within the electrical panel. The crew also discovered a rusting natural gas line on the service side of the gas meter as well as a wind chime made from bamboo that was dangling in the kitchen that was in direct contact with a halogen light

bulb. The crew worked with the resident to get an electrical contractor to correct the deficiencies in the electrical panel. They made contact with the Gas Company to evaluate and repair the gas line and they removed the wind chime which was scorched so it could be relocated to a safer location. The acts by these firefighters reduced the likelihood of a serious fire in this home. They also installed several detectors in the residence in order to provide full smoke alarm protection.

Get Alarmed Virginia detectors will continue to be installed through the end of the grant performance period at the end of August.

Since October, the Community Service Unit developed and enacted a survey program to evaluate the performance of outreach programs provided to the community. For each program administered, a survey was left with the requestor in which they are asked to complete and return it to the Community Services Unit. Returned surveys are reviewed and tallied. The results reveal that the community believes the de-



This electrical panel was discovered by firefighters while visiting a senior citizen during the Get Alarmed Virginia smoke alarm program. Electrical damage can be seen in the upper left hand corner of the photograph which could have started a fire in the panel.

partment performs excellent community outreach programs 78% of the time. 22% of the time they feel the programs are of Good quality. These surveys are an invaluable tool to review community feedback as the department continues to expand outreach opportunities to the citizens of Alexandria. 🚒

IT From Page 1.

location and log in and out each one to ensure all were cleaned of the virus.

One significant challenge was the fact that the virus had the ability to evolve. This created a number of issues when attempting to locate and remove it. Because it evolved, it would reappear in "clean" systems after they had been cleaned in a new, modified form. This required the IT staff to re-clean the affected equipment. The other challenge faced by the IT staff was to maintain one clean and operating PC at every fire department worksite. Because the Department operates 24 hours a day, computers are an essential component of the department's work environment. Minimal PC operation capabilities were a high priority. Fire IT staff were successful in keeping the department supplied with clean, operational PCs



Fire IT staff work diligently to remove a virus from numerous computer systems.

during the entire event.

While City IT maintained the lead on the overall project, they worked hand in hand with Fire IT as the department and the City continued to work with the supplier of the City's PC operating system and the virus protection software manufacturer to find a permanent solution.

"Everyone worked very hard" said Division Chief James Lynch. "They worked as a team; they gave up personal time; and they took on the challenge and were successful in the end" Lynch said. "Captain Washington and Lieutenant Cook were an invaluable resource in getting all our machines collected, cleaned and redistributed in a timely manner" Lynch added.

By April 28 the virus event was over. All computers had returned to normal operation and all equipment had been returned to their

original work site. Looking at Fire Headquarters from the outside, no one would have been alerted to the amount of activity on going inside with Fire IT staff. They worked quickly and quietly, almost unnoticed. Yet they responded to a major IT crisis that was equivalent to a five alarm fire incident. Thanks Fire IT Team for a job well done. 🖨

Fire News, From Page 3.

On June 8, fire crews from Stations 204 and 209 responded to a vehicle fire in Del Ray. The vehicle belonged to the wife of State Delegate David Englin (D-45). Personnel were able to confine the fire to the vehicle's engine compartment. Englin tweeted a photo later that day and remarked "Phew! Many thanks to Alexandria Fire Department for quick response to spontaneous combustion of Shayna's Mustang."



Delegate Englin's wife's vehicle.

Courtesy Photo

On June 16 at 11:24 am units from the Alexandria Fire Department responded to a reported garage fire in a townhouse in the 700 block of Day Lane. Firefighters arrived on the scene within 5 minutes and encountered smoke conditions coming from the first floor garage. Upon entering the garage firefighters discovered a small fire. The majority of the fire had been successfully extinguished by the home's residential sprinkler system. The remaining fire was extinguished by firefighters.

The quick response by the residential sprinkler fire system resulted in the protection of an automobile and motorcycle as well as other contents within the garage. Both vehicles were undamaged. The fire was prevented from spreading beyond the garage by the sprinkler system, which minimized fire damage and allowed the occupants to remain in their residence after the incident.

Unlike Maryland, Virginia does not have a mandatory residential sprinkler requirement for townhouses. Such residences only have residential sprinkler systems installed when they exceed certain height and area requirements under the building code.

On June 17, 2011, at approximately 12:19 AM units from the Alexandria Fire Department, assisted by Arlington and Fairfax County fire departments responded to a report of a gas fireplace on fire in the 200 block of Park Road. Firefighters arriving on the scene reported heavy smoke coming from the home. Firefighters entered the home and encountered fire on three floors of the residence. A second alarm was requested to

assist on scene fire crews who initiated a coordinated attack of the fires. The fires were quickly extinguished; however fire crews remained on the scene for several more hours doing an extensive search of interior wall, attic and the concealed floor spaces on the first and second floors for additional smoldering fires.

One occupant was home at the time of the fire and was able to escape the residence after being alerted of the fire by in home smoke alarms. Damage is estimated at \$300,000.

"I am fine and grateful for the quick response by the Alexandria Fire Department and the visit this morning from our own MWAA Fire Chief." wrote Lynne Hampton, President and CEO of the Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority and owner of the home.

Fire investigators determined the fire started after lighting struck an exterior chimney igniting additional building components as it traveled through an interior wall spaces from the attic to the lower floors of the home. 🚒

Fire Prevention and Life Safety

On July 1, 2011 the Fire Prevention and Life Safety Section of the Alexandria Fire Department assumed responsibilities for all Fire Prevention, Fire Protection Systems Retesting, and Investigation functions formerly handled by the Office of Code Administration. At the beginning of 2011 the Office of Code Administration separated from the Alexandria Fire Department and became the Department of Code Administration. At that time, the Fire Prevention and Life Safety Section was created to address and manage the above listed functions that would remain within the Alexandria Fire Department.

On July 1, the operating budgets of Department of Code Administration were separated and now operate independently of the Fire Department. The following is a brief description of the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Prevention and Life Safety Section and its continued working relationship with the Department of Code Administration.

The Fire Prevention and Life Safety Section is comprised of several units commanded by Assistant Fire Chief Rudolph Thomas. The section administers the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, applicable sections of the Virginia Construction Code and provisions of the Code of the City of Alexandria. Staff inspects existing properties for compliance with these codes as well as providing information and education to property owners, their representatives, and the occupants to achieve code compliance. The section provides inspection and oversight for the retesting of existing fire protection systems. Inspection staff responds to complaints and conduct annual inspections to ensure proper operation of these critical life safety systems. Fire Marshals investigate incidents relating to fires, explosion related incidents, as well as, incidents involving the release of hazardous materials and environmental crimes.

Fire Prevention Permits

Fire Marshals conduct Fire Prevention Permit inspections. This is administered through provisions of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, applicable sections of the Virginia Construction Code and provisions of the Code of the City of Alexandria. The Fire Marshals are responsible for preventing fires through annual inspections of permitted commercial or public buildings, licensed facilities and industrial operations and other buildings within the City of Alex-

andria. The Fire Marshals also inspect for fire and life safety hazards in all existing commercial, multi-family dwellings and state-licensed facilities including daycare, foster homes, nursing homes, schools and hospitals.

In addition, Fire Marshals conduct special event inspections where such things as temporary tents, outdoor food vendors and bon fires are common. Fire Marshals investigate complaints of overcrowding, locked or blocked exits and residential hoarding.

Site Plan Review

Fire Marshals and Fire Systems Retesting staff conduct Fire Department Site Plan reviews to ensure emergency access; adequate fire hydrant locations; fire flows; fire department connections; fire lanes; ladder truck accessibility in mid-rise to high-rise buildings and handicap accessibility. In addition, the physical designs of the streets are examined for characteristics such as width, length and grade to ensure adequate fire department access.

Fire Investigations

Fire Marshals conduct investigations of fire and explosive related incidents within the City, as well as incidents involving the release of hazardous materials and environmental crimes. Fire Marshals are empowered with full law enforcement powers to conduct criminal investigations, make arrests and prepare cases for prosecution related to these crimes. Fire Marshals also investigate burn related injuries and construction accidents.

Fire Protection Systems Retesting Unit

The Fire Protection Systems Retesting Unit (FPR) ensures existing fire protection systems throughout the City are in-service, functioning properly, inspected, tested, and maintained appropriately. The Fire Protection Systems Retesting Unit deals with all types of fire protection systems including fire sprinkler, fire pump, standpipe, suppression, fire hydrants, alarm, detection, smoke control, and access control systems. The FPR inspectors witness fire protection system inspections and tests performed by the building owners, the owner representatives, or their contractors. In addition, the inspectors take time to provide information and educate the property owners, their representatives, and contractors regarding code requirements and the minimum required inspection and test requirements and frequency.

Environmental Investigation Unit (EIU)

Fire Marshals are tasked with the investigation of releases of hazardous materials; response to complaints of illegal dumping of hazardous materials, and environmental crimes. Additionally, the unit conducts annual permit inspections and proactive inspections of all hazardous and industrial use buildings in the City. The Environmental Investigation Unit reviews and maintains records of spill prevention and countermeasure plans for facilities that require them; support and assist other City agencies to review current environmental cases and issues.

Several Memorandums of Understanding have been signed by the Fire Chief and the Director of Code Administration which address business practices of both agencies after hours, weekends and on holidays.

Welcome Fire Prevention and Life Safety Section. 🚒

EMS From Page 4.

Assistant Chief Andrew Snead summed up the weeks events by saying

“Thank you for everyone’s professional, compassionate, competent, and caring interactions over the last two days with our department’s EMS Week activities. Our planned activities provided direct medical intervention for at least five of our City’s residents and visitors. Our community is extremely appreciative of our efforts. We distributed over 1,500 pamphlets outlining the seven most common EMS emergencies, thus promoting a healthier and informed community.

Job Well Done! 🚒



Medic Mario Weber takes vitals on a visitor to the Farmer's Market.

Awards and Recognition

Alexandria Jaycees Honor Medics

On April 5 the Alexandria Jaycees held a Community Appreciation event to celebrate and honor members of the Fire, Police and Sheriff's Departments for their outstanding contributions to the City professionally and through volunteer work and personal commitment.



EMS Supervisor Kelsey Bonkoski

Two department employees received recognition and awards. Kelsea Bonkoski and Josh Weissman received awards from the Alexandria Jaycees for their work on the Field Officer Training Program and the extensive training and instruction contributions they both made to the City and the region. Congratulations Kelsey and Josh.



Medic II Josh Weissman

AFD Employees Honored at the 2011 Chamber of Commerce Valor Awards

On April 26 members of the department and the community gathered to honor members of the Fire, Police and Sheriff departments for acts of valor during 2010. Six firefighters and two paramedics received awards at the ceremony which was held at the Alexandria Hilton—Mark Center. Employees honored were:

Firefighter James Taylor – Bronze Medal
Captain Thurston McClain – Lifesaving Award

Firefighter Matthew Craig – Lifesaving Award

Firefighter Michael Faber – Lifesaving Award

Acting Lieutenant Doug Townshend – Lifesaving Award

Firefighter John M. Shaffer – Lifesaving Award

On the evening of May 13, 2010 at 11:24 pm, firefighters were dispatched to a two alarm apartment fire in a high-rise building located in the 500 block of Slaters Lane. The first 9-1-1 call reported an oven fire in an apartment on the 4th floor of the building. A second 9-1-1 call indicated that there was a report of smoke on the third floor of the same building.

Firefighters from Engine and Truck Company 204 were the first to arrive at the building where they climbed three flights of stairs to the third floor where smoke was reported.

Captain McClain, Firefighter Matthew Craig and Firefighter Michael Faber located an apartment door that was hot to the touch. They forced open the door and entered the apartment with a fire hose, followed by Lieutenant Townshend, Firefighter John M. Shaffer and Firefighter James Taylor. Captain McClain's crew attacked a fire in the kitchen and provided protection for Lieutenant Townshend and his personnel to begin a search of the apartment. Truck 204's personnel found a male victim on the floor, unconscious and not breathing. They carried the victim down three flights of stairs. Firefighter James Taylor removed his face mask and forced fresh air into the mouth and lungs of the fire victim in an attempt to resuscitate him, meanwhile exposing himself to the smoke filled environment without the protection of his breathing mask.

The members of Truck 204's crew encountered two lifeless dogs due to heavy smoke conditions in the apartment. The two dogs could not be revived.

Because of the teamwork by the crews of Engine Company and Truck Company 204 and of the quick and selfless actions by Firefighter James Taylor, the victim of this apartment fire is alive today.

Paramedic Jason Cage – Lifesaving Award

Paramedic Elizabeth King – Lifesaving Award

On Monday August 30th, 2010 Paramedics Jason Cage and Elizabeth King witnessed an



Fire Chief Adam Thiel, Firefighters John Schaffer, Matthew Craig, James Taylor and Captain Thurston McClain at the 2011 Valor Awards.

automobile accident the intersection of Howard Street and Seminary Road in which one sedan struck another causing one of the vehicles to cross the intersection and hit a telephone pole. The vehicle striking the telephone pole caught fire in the engine compartment which began to impinge upon the wooden pole.



Medic II Jason Cage

Paramedic Cage radioed for assistance. Paramedic Elizabeth King left the medic unit and approached the vehicle on fire. She assisted the dazed driver out of the vehicle and safely away from the accident. Paramedic Cage grabbed a fire extinguisher from the medic unit and started to extinguish the fire in the engine compartment. At that time smoke had completely filled the passenger compartment, obscuring all visibility

Summer 2011 Run Statistics (April through June)

	Unit	EMS	SUP	TOTAL	Current Yr	Previous Yr
Station 201	E201	147	203	350	669	1350
Station 202	M202	464	103	570	1136	2401
Station 203	E203	144	133	277	559	1278
	T203	15	217	232	501	1060
Total		159	350	509	1060	2338
Station 204	E204	163	189	352	712	1434
	T204	29	264	293	642	1270
Total		192	453	645	1354	2704
Station 205	E205	215	322	537	1098	2097
	M205	552	152	704	1394	3128
Total		767	474	1241	2492	5225
Station 206	E206	234	265	499	992	2025
	M206	556	120	676	1344	2852
	R206	62	72	134	268	483
Total		852	457	1309		
Station 207	E207	86	251	337	970	2184
	M207	484	112	596	1186	2453
Total		570	363	933	2156	4637
Station 208	E208	310	346	656	1366	2987
	M208	514	164	678	1425	3029
	T208	57	336	393	771	1552
Total		881	846	1727	3562	7568
Station 209	E209	152	181	333	701	1507
	H209	1	19	20	30	54
	S209	9	104	113	231	513
Total		162	304	466	962	2074
Peak Time Medics	M213	149	40	189	263	0
	M214	90	10	100	157	0
Total		239	50	289	420	0
Station totals		4436	3603	8039	16415	33657

inside the vehicle. The driver assisted by Paramedic King turned and began yelling and pointing to the back seat of the car. Paramedic King and Paramedic Cage, unable to see into the car due to the heavy smoke conditions due to the active fire, and believing there were persons still trapped inside the car decided immediate intervention was critical to the survival of anyone else inside the car. Approaching the car a second time,



Medic II Elizabeth King

Paramedic King re-entered the smoke filled vehicle without any protective equipment or respiratory protection in search of the infants. Meanwhile, Paramedic Cage continued to attack the fire and prevent it from spreading into the passenger compartment where Paramedic King was searching. Paramedic King found two small dogs in the back seat of the car which were removed

and placed them out of harm's way with the driver. No one else was located inside the vehicle. Paramedic Cage was able to fully extinguish the fire prior to the arrival of additional fire units.

For their actions in saving the driver of the vehicle and putting themselves in harm's way to conduct a search of the vehicle in an extremely hazardous environment without proper equipment for what were initially believed to be trapped infants these members were award the Lifesaving Award. 🚒

HOT Shots



Left and Right: Hazmat team members deploy booms along the creek near Holland Lane where an oil sheen was reported by a passerby. Incident 11-4104



Left: EMS Supervisor Martha Tuthill (center) receives an award for 30 years of EMS service.

Right: Medic II William Jordan (center) receives an award for 30 years of EMS service.

EMS Operations Manager Brian Hricik (L) and Assistant Chief Andrew Snead (R) are pictured in both photos.



Left: Firefighter I Daryoush Hematti checks a resident's blood sugar during EMS Week.

Right: Medic II Scott Serino, Firefighter I Meghan Rowan and Medic II Mario Weber participate in EMS outreach at the Farmer's Market.



Firefighters from Engine Companies 204 and 209 extinguish a brush fire along the CSX railroad tracks. Incident 11-5801



Firefighters finish extinguishing a garage fire in the 700 block of Day Lane. The bulk of the fire was successfully extinguished by the home's residential fire sprinkler system prior to the arrival of the fire department. Incident 11-8429.